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given by Professor Alcée Fortier of Tulane University, of visits made to the Isleños of Louisiana. This colony came here in 1778 from the Canary islands. Their customs and mode of life were described, and specimens given of their language. They generally drop the final consonants, and, in certain cases, the medial ones. Before a vowel *c* is pronounced as in French, and *s* is dropped before a consonant. These people are true children of nature who live without culture and without religion.

Professor Elliott spoke of the linguistic problems which the speech of this colony suggests. Coming as these colonists do from the Canary islands, and, at an earlier date, from Spain, we have the question of speech mixture already facing the investigator during their stay on the islands: mixture with the French from the *Pays de Caux* (Upper Normandy); Béthencourt was *Cauchois*. But before either French or Spaniards came to the Canary islands the Carthaginians were settled there, and hence we may expect to find possible traces of Punic speech among the Isleños of Louisiana. The material so far presented is not sufficient to enable us to determine the Spanish dialect to which the language of the Isleños is related.

The last paper offered before the Convention, was by Mr. Julius Blume of Johns Hopkins Univ., on "Jean de Mairet. A critical study in the history of French Literature." The writer discussed the chronology of de Mairet's plays as given by Parfaict, which the investigations of the last ten years have overthrown. Mr. Blume's researches show that some of the dates given by Dannheisser are likewise incorrect. "Sylvie" was written in the year 1624-5; "Sylvanire" in 1629 and "Sophonisba" in 1633. Dr. Otto has charged de Mairet with plagiarism, but the charge is not sufficiently substantiated. Leaving "Sylvanire" aside, de Mairet's other works show that he was an independent writer. Before his time, six tragedies on Sophonisba had appeared in France, but that of de Mairet is characterised by an originality that surpasses all the others.

Dr. F. M. Warren of Adelbert College, showed how de Mairet's dates may be ascertained by a comparison with those of certain works of Corneille.

At the closing session a resolution was passed expressing profound regret for the loss which the association has sustained in the death of Dr. Thomas McCabe of Bryn Mawr College.

A resolution was passed expressing the thanks of the Association to the President and Trustees of the Columbian University for generously granting the use of their building for the meetings.

The association then adjourned to meet in Washington during the Christmas Holidays of 1892.

T. LOGIE.

Williams College.

"A NEW EXEGESIS OF PURGATORIO
xix, 51." *

THE passage of "Purgatorio" to which the new exegesis refers describes an angel meeting Dante and Virgil and saying:

Mosse le penne poi e ventilonne,
Qui *lugent* affermando esser beati,
Che avran di consolar l'anime *donne*.

He moved his pinions afterwards and fanned us,
Affirming those *qui lugent* to be blessed,
For they shall have their souls with comfort filled.
(Longfellow's translation.)

In commenting upon this passage the author of 'A New Exegesis' says:

"The difficulty consists in explaining the use and meaning of the last word *donne*."—"I believe that the true exegesis of this verse consists in explaining the word *donne* as the abridged past participle of *donare*, according to which the rendering would be: 'For they shall have their souls *gifted, endowed* with consolation.'"

Now this would not at all be the rendering if the writer's exegesis were rigorously applied; that is, if the word *donne* were treated and translated as the past participle of *donare*. In his translation the author apparently mistook *donare*, 'to give,' for *dotare*, 'to gift,' 'to endow,' and, accordingly, his rendering was:

"For they shall have their souls *endowed, gifted* with consolation," whereas it ought to have been:

"For they shall have their souls *given* with consolation."

Had the writer not fallen into the error just pointed out, the inconsistent result: "For they

* Proposed by Professor H. A. Todd in MOD. LANG. NOTES, vol. vi, No. 7, pp. 195-196.

shall have their souls *given* with consolation" which he would have reached, might have instantly made him aware of the inconsistency of his exegesis; but he allowed himself to be misled by the similarity in sense between *donare* and *dotare* and, paying no attention to the difference in their construction, went on building his theory upon a false premise.

The difficulties which inevitably awaited him in the course of his inquiry might still have compelled him to pause and consider and, perhaps, to retrace his steps. But the fact that either participle, *gifted* or *endowed*, did enable him to get out of the verse the sense he wanted, while *given* or any other participle in every respect like it, did not, confirmed him in his error, which seems to have become for him a kind of fixed idea.

No wonder, then, that when he looked about for authority in support of his assumption, namely, *donne* must be the abridged participle of *donare*, he failed to find any.

"I am not able," he writes, "to cite a single other occurrence of the abridged past participle of *donato*."

In spite of this, he did not, apparently, suspect that *donare* might be one of the numerous Italian verbs of the first conjugation that do not admit of an abridged past participle. And yet he did not fail to perceive that "The coincidence of form with the noun *dono* in the masculine singular would operate to prevent its use"; that is, the use of the same word as an abridged past participle.

Again: when confronted by the preposition *di* accompanying *donne* (supposed abridgment of *donate*), finding himself

"... not in a position at the present writing to cite examples of the employment of *donato* with the preposition *di*,"

the writer resorted to an example of *dotato di* ('endowed with') which

"... occurs twice," he writes, "in the *Paradiso*, and is so natural to the spirit of the Italian language as to occasion no question." But, obviously, two or even countless examples of *dotato di* can no more justify the use of *donato di* in Italian than countless examples of 'endowed with' can justify the use of 'given with' in the sense of 'gifted with' in English. Between *dotare* and *donare* exists precisely the same difference as between 'to endow' and

'to give.' Hence the expression *dotare alcuno di qualche cosa*, or 'to endow somebody with something,' is as natural and necessary, as *donare alcuno di qualche cosa*, or 'to give somebody with something' in the sense of 'to endow somebody with something,' is unnatural and impossible. This is the reason why no example of *donato di* can at any time be cited, while examples of *dotato di* occur not only twice in the "*Paradiso*," but in every instance in which the verb *dotare* with its complements is correctly used.

The other difficulty, namely, *donne* where *done* should have been expected, was not overlooked by the author; on the contrary he saw it, and thought it could be surely overcome by a mere comparison:

"The difficulty," he writes, "... is easily removed by a comparison of *Purg.* xxv, 135, where, to meet the exigencies of the rime, Dante uses *imponne* for *imponere*."

That Dante ever changed the essential form of a word to meet the exigencies of a rhyme would be, I think, very hard to prove; however, he certainly did nothing of the kind in the instance cited by the writer. Here is the passage:

... e mariti che fur casti,
Come virtute e matrimonio *imponne*.

thus rendered by Longfellow:

... and the husbands, who were chaste,
As virtue and the marriage vow *imposes*.

Evidently *imponne* is here a legitimate compound of the verb *impon* + the personal pronoun *ne* (to us), which latter, not being necessary to the sense, was omitted by Longfellow on account of the measure. The comparison, then, suggested by the writer through an evident misapprehension of the true nature of the word *imponne*, can in no way explain the presence of what he supposes to be an alien *n* in the word *donne*. Happily, however, the difficulty does not exist except for him and those who accept his theory, for *donne* is not and cannot be the abridged past participle of *donare*. *Donne* is the familiar substantive derived from the Latin *dominae*, *domnae* ('ladies') which, by virtue of its very origin, has always been pronounced, written and printed with two *n*'s.

Before concluding his article the writer remarks:

"To my mind a very convincing evidence of the correctness of the view above given is found in a passage of the 'Vita Nuova,' in which the resemblance to Purg. xix, 51 is so strong that it is difficult to believe the verse of the 'Vita Nuova' was not, consciously or unconsciously, in the poet's mind when he penned the line of the Purgatorio."

I quote here the verse and italicise it as did the writer, adding, however, for the convenience of the reader, the verse of the "Purgatorio," which the writer omitted.

E d'ogni consolar l'anima spoglia

—'Vita Nuova.'

Che avran di consolar l'anime donne.

—"Purgatorio."

"It will be seen," remarks the writer, "that the verse here italicised corresponds in every word but one with that under consideration, and, what is peculiarly noteworthy, that the word *spoglia* is an abridged participle forming an exact counterpart, with precisely opposite meaning, to the rendering here proposed."

Whether the two verses correspond with each other in every word but one, or not, the reader can see for himself.

As to the Italian word *spoglia* I have to remark that, if it was to furnish evidence in favor of the writer's theory, it should have been compared not with the English "rendering here proposed" (which is an English word wrongly introduced by the author) but with its true counterpart, the Italian word *donne*, supposed abridged participle of *donare*. As it is, then, the quoted verse of the 'Vita Nuova' affords no evidence whatsoever of the correctness of the new exegesis.

It will not be amiss in this connection to note that the above verse of the 'Vita Nuova' is cited by Andreoli, Camerini and Fraticelli in their comments on the passage of the "Purgatorio" in question, but for a different purpose from that for which it was quoted by the writer. Said commentators do not try to prove by it that *spoglia* is an exact counterpart to *donne*, or that *donne* is the abridged past participle of *donare* as *spoglia* is of *spogliare*. They cite the verse only to show by comparison that the infinitive *consolar* is used in the passage of the "Purgatorio" as a substantive in the place of *consolazione*, as it is manifestly used in the verse of the 'Vita Nuova.' Neither is any proof furnished in any of the three comments of any extraordinary meaning attributed by

Dante in the present instance to the word *donne*. There it is simply stated that the word was employed by the poet in its usual meaning of *signore, posseditrici, ricche*. These facts I have stated, because to my mind they are full of significance. However, he it noticed that, taking the word *donne* in any one of the meanings proposed by the three commentators; namely, in the meaning of either 'mistresses,' 'possessors' or 'rich' (I give preference to the last, to avoid uncouthness of expression), the rendering of the verse would be: "For they shall have their souls rich in consolation." It will be seen that this rendering is like in meaning to "for they shall have their souls gifted, endowed with consolation" proposed by the writer, and, what is essential, without the word *donne* being forced into being what it is not.

Now, if it be considered that the word *donne* is solely and invariably described as a substantive by the dictionary of the Italian language, and has heretofore been considered as such by all interpreters except the writer; that taken as a substantive in its natural and usual sense of 'ladies,' 'mistresses,' 'rich,' the word renders the verse perfectly intelligible, and the meaning of it consistent with the whole passage as well as with reason; that no commentator has ever for hundreds of years even suspected the word *donne* to be the abridged past participle of *donare*, as the writer himself half-wondering remarks; and, lastly, that by treating it as such a participle, in accordance with the exegesis under consideration, the rendering of the verse would be unintelligible, as has been shown, it will not seem too rash to conclude that the new exegesis is both groundless and needless.

There remains still a statement by the writer which calls for examination, and with this my task will be completed.

The statement is as follows:

"Purgatorio xix, 51 is one of the most variously interpreted of the intrinsically less important passages of the 'Divina Commedia'; nor can any of the numerous explanations heretofore offered be regarded as satisfactory."

That this statement truly represents the opinion of the writer on the subject, I will not doubt for a moment; but that it represents the actual reality must be denied on the strength

of the evidence furnished by the writer himself. This evidence consists in a passage from Scartazzini's Commentary to his edition of the 'Divina Commedia,' which the writer quotes, not without first remarking that in it

"Scartazzini . . . has classified the various attempted interpretations of the verse in question."

The passage is too long to be quoted here, but any one who reads it in the writer's article I am examining will learn, that out of 28 + *etc.*, *etc.* commentators, only seven propose various interpretations, the others; namely, 21 + *etc.*, *etc.* (summed up by Scartazzini in the expression "most commentators"), all agree in interpreting *donne* in its proper meaning of *signore*, *padrone* (mistresses, 'possessors'), and explain: "Their souls will be possessors of consolation."

The inference which any student of Dante would seem warranted to draw from these facts would be exactly opposite to that drawn by the writer. For a passage which ("Purgatorio," xix, 51) is variously interpreted by only seven out of twenty-eight and more commentators, ought to be considered as one not of the *most*, but of the *least*

"variously interpreted of the intrinsically less important passages of the 'Divina Commedia.'"

And the one interpretation on which most commentators are agreed, and which makes the verse very plain and its sense what it must evidently be, ought surely to be regarded as satisfactory.

C. L. SPERANZA.

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[It is gratifying to find my modest effort so earnestly discussed by Professor Speranza. Evidently I must plead guilty to the charge of having departed from the "one interpretation on which most commentators are agreed," but fortunately it is no longer in vogue to give weight to numbers in such a matter, even when the disparity between the opposing factions is as great as that between 21 + *etc.*, *etc.* and 7 + *etc.*, *etc.* (the latter only a scattering minority, at that!). Should it come, however, to a question of laying authority against authority, I must prefer to stand with Scartazzini, who in my former article was quoted as saying: "Noi dobbiamo confessare di non sapere proporre interpretazione migliore, sebbene anche questa non ci voglia andar troppo a grado."

The essential issue is: Could Dante have used the phrase *donato di* poetically in the sense of 'gifted with'? As being the opinion of a cultivated Italian, Professor Speranza's belief that he could not, is entitled to all consideration; but I am not prepared to regard it as necessarily conclusive. If his contention had reference to Ital. *dare*, *dato*, the uses of which have more direct analogy with those of Eng. *give*, *given*, I should readily yield the point; but between Ital. *dono* and *donato* I think I see the easy possibility, at least in poetic usage, of a relation similar to that between Eng. *gift* and *gifted*. As to the comparison with *imponne*, Prof. Speranza is right in doubting that Dante would have unwarrantably distorted a word to accommodate it to a rime, and is quite probably correct in seeing in *imponne* a combination of *impon* + *ne*. But the strength or weakness of my position does not depend on the aptness of this particular comparison. The interesting question is, whether Dante has here adopted a pronunciation of *done* (presumably for *donate*) which would be in accordance with a tendency at present manifested in Northern Italy, as described by Salvioni in his 'Fonetica del dialetto moderno della città di Milano' (cited by Meyer-Lübke, 'Italienische Grammatik,' § 268):

"L'u di questi casi è vibrato come la doppia toscana, ma più breve e compatta; ch'è in vece di ripartire le sue articolazioni tra la vocale antecedente e la seguente, le appoggia per intera alla seguente, quasi fosse scritto *bo-nna*."

From Prof. Scott's contribution to the December number of MOD. LANG. NOTES (col. 505), I infer that he accepts the theory I have advanced and I regard Mr. A. J. Butler's gloss ("*done* = *donate*") of Buti's reading, there cited, (which, I need not say, was before unknown to me), as a corroboration of an interpretation to which I still continue to hold tentatively, while inviting the further discussion of scholars.

H. A. T.]

DIE KIRCHLICHE SATIRE UND RELIGIÖSE WELTANSCHAUUNG

in Brant's 'Narrenschiff' und Erasmus' 'Narrenlob,' resp. in den 'Colloquia.'¹

I.

SEBASTIAN BRANT'S berühmtestes Werk, 'Das Narrenschiff' ist nicht wie Pallas Athene aus des Dichters Kopfe entsprungen. Die grosse Familie der Narren ist so alt wie das Menschengeschlecht, und auch ihre Bekämpfung

¹ Erasmus hat die im 'Narrenlob' enthaltene Satire durchweg in den 'Colloquia' wiederaufgenommen und ernstlicher behandelt.